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SUBJECT: UN: IRAQ ELECTIONS "WENT VERY WELL"

Classified By: Amb. Susan Rice, for reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On February 13, DPA officials briefed USUN and UKUN on the UN's assessment of elections in Iraq, as well as on UNAMI-related issues. In general, the UN believes the elections went very well, despite initial concerns regarding the lower turnout. DPA is finalizing the UNAMI report to the Security Council and will submit it around February 18. SRSG de Mistura will brief the Council February 26 on Iraq/UNAMI, and plans a one-day trip to Washington around that time to meet with USG representatives. DPA is also beginning its preparations to report, per UNSCR 1859, on all outstanding SC resolutions related to Iraq, with the goal of issuing its report in June. End summary.

#### UNAMI MANDATE ISSUES

¶2. (SBU) In a February 13 meeting in which the UN Department of Public Affairs (DPA) Iraq team briefed USUN and UKUN, Darko Mocibob, team leader for Iraq in DPA, said voter turnouts for the recent provincial elections were respectably high, at roughly 52 percent of the voting population. The election encompassed a broad range of voters, religious sects, and both genders. Final results are expected February ¶23. The election was monitored by both domestic and international watch groups, all of which said the elections were carried out in a professional manner and followed regulatory procedures. The reaction of regional countries was "mutes, but positive," said Mocibob.

¶3. (C) Although there were some registered complaints, the most serious issue regards voting in areas with disputed boundaries. There were significant above average turnouts in disputed areas caused by leaders busing people in to vote. The only region where this seems to have affected the votes was Khanaqin, where voter turnout exceeded 100 percent. One hundred and three polling stations were audited and the questionable ballots were excluded. The information was discussed with the voting commission before any action was taken. The decision has yet to be disclosed publicly. Preemptive complaints also occurred in the Anbar and Hanaki provinces; however, these complaints were rescinded by the concerned parties when the results turned out to be in their favor.

¶4. (SBU) According to Mocibob, the current election results show the incumbents generally suffered due to the perception of political corruption and their inability to deliver social services. Political parties emphasizing the primacy of the central government won over federalist parties. The successful provincial elections are only the beginning of a busy 2009 election season in Iraq, he noted: the Kurdish governorates will likely vote on May 19, and there may also be municipal elections later in 2009, as well as national elections.

¶5. (SBU) Mocibob also provided an update on the disputed internal boundaries process. UNAMI is preparing individual reports for the 14 disputed districts, along with a "chapeau" document that details its methodology and conclusions.

Regarding Kirkuk, UNAMI will likely propose five options for the consideration of the Iraqi government and parliament. It expects to conclude its reporting by the end of February, and will seek to present its conclusions at the beginning of March. The rollout will be more low-key than before; UNAMI may only present its conclusions to key government and parliament figures, and then defer to their judgment regarding any further actions.

#### UNAMI ADMINISTRATION/SECURITY

¶6. (SBU) Mocibob said UNAMI's humanitarian/development/reconstruction staff based in Amman are now actively seeking to move their offices to Baghdad, although there are serious space constraints that may not allow everyone to move. The maximum number of international personnel possible in Baghdad is 164; currently there are ¶125. As a way to shorten the period before UNAMI can construct and operate new facilities, UNAMI is suggesting that it build prefabricated modules instead of a long-term facility at the location in the International Zone that the Iraqi government has assigned to it. Mocibob said this was an issue under consideration by UN headquarters, and many questions needed to be answered before moving forward. UNAMI is moving forward slowly in procuring two helicopters, said Mocibob. Two companies have expressed interest in bidding on the project, although a decision is not imminent.

¶7. (SBU) Separately, Mocibob said DPA is beginning the process of writing the report mandated by UNSCR 1859: a review of all outstanding Security Council resolutions pertaining to Iraq. Once DPA has a UN team set up to review

USUN NEW Y 00000156 002 OF 002

the resolutions, it will consult with Iraq. He noted that the UN wants the report to be technical, not prescriptive. DPA will also consult with Iraq regarding the inclusion of Kuwait, since many of the resolutions affect both countries.

Rice